

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOGADI 00364 01 OF 02 061142Z

ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00

SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 IO-13 AID-05 EB-08 TRSE-00

OMB-01 /085 W

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O R 060815Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4671

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY SANA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MOGADISCIO 0364

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARA NUMBER 7)

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SO, US

SUBJ: DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY SEELYE'S MEETING WITH SOMALI
FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS

1. SUMMARY: DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY TALCOTT W. SEELYE
MET WITH SOMALI FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS FOR TWO-AND-ONE-HALF
HOURS MARCH 1, 1977. SOMALI SIDE REPRESENTED BY ACTING DIRECTOR
GENERAL OF FOREIGN MINISTRY MOHAMED SHARIF MOHAMOUD, ACTING DIRECTOR
OF AFRICAN AFFAIRS MS. FADUMA ISAQ BIHI AND DIRECTOR OF INTERNATIONAL
ORGANIZATION AFFAIRS ABDIRAHMAN HUSSEIN AHMED. MEETING, WHICH WAS
ONE OF FRANKEST AND MOST COMPREHENSIVE DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN US AND
SOMALI OFFICIALS IN RECENT YEARS, AMPLY DEMONSTRATED POLITICAL CHASM
SEPARATING TWO GOVERNMENTS BUT WAS CORDIAL THROUGHOUT. END SUMMARY.

2. SEELYE OPENED WITH STATEMENT OF NEW US ADMINISTRATION'S
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PAGE 02 MOGADI 00364 01 OF 02 061142Z

DEEP INTEREST IN AFRICA AND KTS DETERMINATION PLAY ACTIVE AND
CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE THERE. USG HAD NO PRECONCEIVED PREFERENCES BETWEEN
INTERNAL SYSTEMS, JUDGING SYSTEMS ON BASIS OF WHETHER
THEY SERVED INTERESTS OF PEOPLE. THUS,
USG COULD WORK WITH SOCIALIST GOVERNMENTS, INCLUDING GSDR, WITH
NO INHERENT DIFFICULTY. USG WISHED GSDR WELL IN ITS ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES AND, IF THERE WERE WAYS IN WHICH IT

COULD HELP IN THEIR ATTAINMENT, IT WAS PREPARED DO SO UNDER THE RIGHT CONDITIONS.

3. SIMILARLY, USG HAD NO QUARREL WITH PRINCIPLE OF NON-ALIGNMENT, WHICH WAS TOTALLY CONGENIAL WITH OVER-RIDING US INTEREST IN WORLD PEACE. HOWEVER, NON-ALIGNMENT DID NOT NECESSARILY MEAN AUTOMATIC HOSTILITY TO US. LATTER, EVEN IF UNDERSTANDABLE IN CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES, WAS NOT TRUE NON-ALIGNMENT.

4. USG HOPED THAT TWO GOVERNMENTS COULD IMPROVE UNDERSTANDING OF THEIR RESPECTIVE POSITIONS AND IDENTIFY AREAS IN WHICH THEY MIGHT WORK TOGETHER IN FUTURE. THERE WERE BRIGHT SPOTS IN THE RECORD, E.G. GSDR'S POSITION ON PUERTO RICO AT LAST UNGA AND US HUMANITARIAN AID DURING SOMALIA'S DROUGHT EMERGENCY. BUT NUMBER OF BILATERAL IRRITANTS NEEDED TO BE ADDRESSED IF RELATIONS WERE TO IMPROVE FURTHER.

5. MEMBERS OF U.S. MISSION SHOULD HAVE BETTER ACCESS TO GSDR OFFICIALS AND SHOULD BE ABLE MOVE MORE FREELY AROUND SOMALIA. THERE SHOULD BE MORE PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE CONTACT. AN EXCHANGE OF PROPERTIES AT MOGADISCIO, PROPOSED BY GSDR, SHOULD BE EXPEDITED. GSDR SHOULD RESUME NEGOTIATIONS WITH CALTEX TO RESOLVE ISSUE OF FIRM'S BLOCKED FUNDS. IF PROGRESS WAS MADE IN ELIMINATING THESE IRRITANTS, US WAS PREPARED CONSIDER RESUMPTION OF AID TO GSDR. IT SHOULD BE UNDERSTOOD, HOWEVER, THAT SUCH AID WOULD BE RELATIVELY SMALL, REFLECTING OVER-ALL FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS ON USG.

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PAGE 03 MOGADI 00364 01 OF 02 061142Z

6. US AND GSDR ALSO SHOULD LEARN TO THINK IN TERMS OF THEIR COMMON INTERESTS IN AREAS SUCH AS DJIBOUTI, WHERE BOTH GOVERNMENTS SUPPORTED PEACEFUL TRANSITION TO INDEPENDENCE. FRANCE HAD PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR DJIBOUTI NOW BUT, ONCE TERRITORY WAS INDEPENDENT, USG WAS PREPARED EXTEND SMALL AID PROGRAM TO BOLSTER DJIBOUTI'S ECONOMIC VIABILITY. US WAS ALSO CONSIDERING ESTABLISHMENT CONSULATE AT DJIBOUTI. AS GENERAL RULE, US STOOD READY TO PLAY ANY KIND OF USEFUL ROLE IN HORN OF AFRICA DESIRED BY PRINCIPAL ACTORS. IN THAT REGARD, US WAS WORRIED ABOUT TENSIONS SURROUNDING DJIBOUTI, ESPECIALLY EPMG FEARS THAT DJIBOUTI WOULD BE DOMINATED BY SOMALIA AFTER INDEPENDENCE. SEELYE SAID HE HAS TRIED TO DISABUSE EPMG OF EXAGGERATED FEARS DURING HIS RECENT VISIT TO ADDIS ABABA.

7. IN EVALUATING US EFFORTS IN DJIBOUTI AND HORN AS WHOLE, AMBASSADOR SAID, GSDR SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT US HAD "VIRTUALLY NO INFLUENCE" OVER EPMG AND WOULD FIND IT EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO RESTRAIN EPMG FROM ANY COURSE OF ACTION IT DECIDED UPON.

MAIN SOURCES OF MORAL SUASION ON EPMG MUST BE OAU/UN. IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, US HAS SMALL CONTINUING ECONOMIC AND DIMINISHING MILITARY AID PRESENCE IN ETHIOPIA. BUT US HOPED TO PRESERVE SOME PRESENCE IN ETHIOPIA WHATEVER HAPPENED THERE.

8. SEELYE ALSO DISCUSSED US POLICY IN SOUTHERN AFRICA, AS HE SAID, TO TRY TO ANSWER GSDR CRITICISM OF PAST US INITIATIVES THERE. HE EMPHASIZED US ROLE AS CATALYST OF PEACEFUL MOVEMENT TOWARD SELF DETERMINATION AND INDEPENDENCE FOR OPPRESSED PEOPLES, AS WELL AS COMMONALITY OF TWO GOVERNMENTS' LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES IN SUBCONTINENT.

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PAGE 01 MOGADI 00364 02 OF 02 061007Z
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FM AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MOGADISCIO 0364

9. ACTING DIRECTOR GENERAL MOHAMED SHARIF MADE MAIN PRESENTATION ON SOMALI SIDE, CONSISTING LARGELY OF LONG CATALOGUE OF ALLEGED US AGGGRESSION AGAINST SOMALI NATION. PICTURE PRESENTED WAS THAT OF ACTIVE US CONNIVANCE WITH ETHIOPIA AND OTHER COLONIAL POWERS IN HORN OF AFRICA, GOING BACK AS FAR AS 1930'S, TO FRUSTRATE EFFORTS OF SOMALI PEOPLE TO THROW OFF FOREIGN YOKE AND UNITE IN SINGLE STATE. AT EVERY TURN, MOHAMED SHARIF SAID, SUCCESSIVE SOMALI GOVERNMENTS HAD FOUND THEMSELVES BESET BY US. PRESENT GSDR RECALLS BRUTAL CANCELLATION US AID PROGRAM FOLLOWING 1969 REVOLUTION, EFFORTS TO SABOTAGE FOREIGN ASSISTANCE IN DESPERATE DROUGHT PERIOD,

WORLD-WIDE PROPAGANDA DEPICTING GSDR AS "SATELLITE" OF SOVIET UNION, HIGH-LEVEL SNUBS TO GSDR EMISSARIES AND DELIBERATE VIOLATIONS SOMALI TERRITORIAL WATERS BY US NAVAL VESSELS.

10. MOHAMED SHARIFF SINGLED OUT ERITREAN AND DJIBOUTI PROBLEMS AS TEST CASES OF PRESENT US INTENTIONS IN HORN OF AFRICA. ERITREAN PROBLEM WAS "CAUSED" BY US WHICH ENCOURAGED CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 MOGADI 00364 02 OF 02 061007Z

EMPEROR HAILE SELASSIE TO INCORPORATE FORMERLY AUTONOMOUS TERRITORY, HE SAID. USG MUST NOW DEMONSTRATE ITS DEVOTION TO PRINCIPLE OF SELF-DETERMINATION IN ITS APPROACH TO ERITREAN AND DJIBOUTI PROBLEMS. GSDR DID NOT EXPECT USG TO TAKE ITS SIDE AGAINST ETHHIOPIA BUT WAS NONETHELESS LOOKING FOR SIGNS OF US "OBJECTIVITY". AS FAR AS DJIBOUTI WAS CONCERN, GSDR BELIEVED THERE WOULD BE "NO PROBLEM" AS TERRITORY MOVED TOWARD INDEPENDENCE.

11. SEELYE REPLIED, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THAT US HAD NO FIXED POSITION ON ERITREA, EXCEPT THAT IT BELIEVED WORLD TREND WAS TOWARD UNITY AND NOT SPLINTERING OF NATIONS. US COULD ACCEPT FEDERATION, CONFEDERATION OR INDEPENDENCE, ACCORDING TO POPULAR WILL.

12. COMMENTING ON MOHAMED SHARIF'S HISTORICAL CATALOGUE, SEELYE SAID THAT, RATHER THAN DWELL ON PAST, IT WOULD BE MORE PRODUCTIVE FOR ALL CONCERNED TO TRY TO MAKE FRESH START. IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO CHANGE HISTORY EVEN IF OC REGRETTED CERTAIN THINGS. ADDITIONALLY, IT WAS INCUMBENT ON BOTH SIDES TO AVOID OVERDRAWING THEIR RESPECTIVE GRIEVANCES. FOR ITS PART, USG NEVER INTENDED TO HARM INTERESTS OF SOMALIA THROUGH ITS ASSOCIATION WITH ETHIOPIA. IT DOES NOT WANT TO TAKE SIDES NOW AND IS PREPARED TO HELP IN SOMALI DEVELOPMENT EFFORT AS EARNEST OF ITS GOOD WILL. IF BOTH GOVERNMENTS APPROACHED BI-LATERAL RELATIONS IN SPIRIT OF RESTRAINT, THERE WAS EVERY REASON TO BELIEVE THOSE RELATIONS COULD BE IMPROVED.

13. MOHAMED SHARIF ASSURED SEELYE THERE WAS NO INTENTION ON GSDR'S PART TO DWELL ON PAST AND HE PROMISED, TO EXTENT POSSIBLE, TO TRY TO ELIMINATE BILATERAL IRRITANTS RAISED BY AMERICAN SIDE. IN THIS CONNECTION, HE APPEALED FOR UNDERSTANDING OF GSDR'S BUREAUCRATIC PROBLEMS WHICH OFTEN MADE SIMPLE THINGS DIFFICULT AND DIFFICULT THINGS IMPOSSIBLE TO ACCOMPLISH. EMBASSY SHOULD BEGIN AGAIN TO BRING CULTURAL CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 MOGADI 00364 02 OF 02 061007Z

EXCHANGE AND LEADER GRANT OPPORTUNITIES TO ATTENTION OF
FOREIGN MINISTRY AFTER GSDR HAS HAD TIME TO REVIEW STATE OF
BILATERAL RELATIONS.

14. COMMENT: SEELYE'S MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTRY
OFFICIALS ELICITED MOST COMPLETE STATEMENT OF GSDR GRIEVANCES
AGAINST US WHICH WE HAVE HEARD IN RECENT YEARS. EVEN ALLOWING
FOR ELEMENT OF CALCULATED THEATRICALITY, DEPTH OF GSDR
GRIEVANCE WAS STRIKING. IN CIRCUMSTANCES, EVEN VAGUE
ASSURANCES OF GOOD-WILL AND PROMISES TO TRY TO ELIMINATE
MINOR BILATERAL IRRITANTS MARKED PROGRESS OF SORT.
PROBLEM NOW IS TO SUSTAIN THIS MILD PROGRESS AND TO TRY TO
BUILD ON IT.
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